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55 Fifth Ave., New York 3

Published weekly, printed and copyrighted, 1950, in the U. S. A., by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y. MURRAY HILL 3-9685. Entered as second-class matter, February 9, 1934, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. U. S. and Canada, \$7 a year; Foreign \$8. Single copies, 15c.

The Commonweal

Michael Williams

THAT Michael Williams was a man of vision and one of great practical ability is attested by his founding of *THE COMMONWEAL*. At the outset it was but a vague idea, one which had occurred to several others. To bring it from idea to realization he spent two trying years all over the country: addressing and organizing local groups, interviewing bishops and business men, securing contributions, pledges and a staff equal to launching this Catholic laymen's journal of opinion—when there was little spontaneous conscious demand for it. What made his labors all the more heroic is that temperamentally he was a man who took discouragements to heart—and there were many down through the years.

What was the main object in founding an American Catholic layman's review of "literature, the arts and public affairs" as Michael Williams envisioned it? Here is the way the first issue expressed it twenty-six years ago: "To apply the conserving and regenerative forces of the fountain head of Christian tradition, experience and culture to the problems that today all men of good will are seeking to solve."

The point of laymen's attempting to do this is that they are more intimately immersed in the ups and downs of the contemporary world than members of the clergy. They can talk in the language of the world with greater boldness and originality as unofficial and uncommissioned—if well-grounded—spokesmen for the Church. And as laymen they can attest to the fact that the Faith is not words, but life. They can demonstrate that men working in the busy world can find in Christianity materials for constructive solutions of local, national and international problems—problems requiring the cooperation of public-spirited men and women of all faiths.

And how did Michael Williams find his Christian aspirations for society engaged by world happenings while he was Editor? He was from the earliest days an apostle of interfaith cooperation. He was an unyielding antagonist of anti-

Semitism. It was on the basis of his belief in democracy and religious freedom that he staunchly supported Alfred E. Smith for President in 1928. As early as 1933, when Americans still looked upon those emerging European movements with interest and hopefulness, Michael Williams understood and resolutely condemned Fascism and Nazism—as well as Communism.

He was in the front rank of those who fought for social justice. He fought with all the charm and exuberance and warm friendliness of his whole personality, but he really fought.

His stand on Spain showed his disregard for worldly "prudence." Michael Williams supported Franco, to the distress of many friends, because of the fury and tyranny and icy atheism he saw embodied in the Loyalists. His was not a reactionary position, and at the same time he plunged for the furthest development of the New Deal here at home.

For him there were many causes, but one Cause. This was partly nourished by his devotion to the Saints—preeminently Thérèse of Lisieux and Francis of Assisi.

IT IS primarily in *THE COMMONWEAL*, we believe and hope, that his work will go on. He was the pioneer; the task confronting those who carry on what he so nobly started is minor in comparison. Yet much remains to be done in improving the magazine's quality, enlarging its audience and establishing it on a secure financial foundation. *THE COMMONWEAL* must become increasingly better adapted to the needs of our own time. Only then will it be able to contribute adequately to the formation of a Catholic lay opinion which merits and enjoys influence within the Church and throughout this country. That is what Michael Williams so manfully sought to the end of his earthly days.

He died after a long illness, in Hartford, Conn., on October 12. May he rest in peace.

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• NEXT WEEK •

One of the strange inconsistencies now found in Italy is the existence of big landowners who are ardent Communists. The style in which they live, their relationship to their workers—and the way they figure things—reveal a great deal about Communism on the Continent.

All this is made delightfully clear by GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN in an account of a personal visit to Count Ranuccio Bianchi-Bandinelli.

UNLIKE Korea, where US and UN action gives some promise of leading to final success, Indo-China represents a conflict between two imperialisms. And whereas Korea was a ward of the United Nations, Indo-China enjoys no special international status which would render it amenable to the UN Korea pattern.

Of the two imperialisms the French, or Western one, is the older. It has a sordid past. It is one which represents the exploitation and domination against which the Asiatic peoples are now feverishly in revolt. Support for continuance of French rule even in the mildest form conceivable, is wholly lacking throughout Asia. Yet, of the two, it is only French rule which could lead eventually to true national self-determination and a form of government that would secure the basic human liberties for all. To do so, of course, it would have to prepare the way wholeheartedly and then hand over the controls.

With Russian imperialism there is no turning back—or forward. While gradual emancipation is possible with continuation of French control, complete enslavement is inevitable in an Indo-China fallen into the Russian orbit.

In other words the French is the preferable of the two imperialisms for Indo-China—as well as considerably better for the maintenance of an anti-Russian balance of power in the desperate world struggle.

Unhappily policy can follow preference here to but a limited extent. America's commitment is in Europe; we cannot go beyond supplying the beleaguered French with implements of war; we cannot send them the men they need so sorely.

Less welcome, but also in order, is plenty of advice. The United States should use its influence to persuade the French to plan for full-fledged independence. If Bao Dai persists in lounging on the Riviera while his country goes up in flames, the French should turn to some leader who will more nearly embody the native aspirations for a government of their own. Our policy with the French should combine material aid with persistent pressure toward self-government.

Badly as things are now going there, the United States did give the Filipinos their independence; we took the lead in securing the same for Indonesia, as we now push for a united, independent Korea. In Indo-China we are confronted with a different problem, but it is still possible to maintain a consistent Far East policy—one

which is in line with what President Truman has so forcefully outlined in his San Francisco speech.

Words for the Voice

AMERICANS have one wrong idea about themselves and the contrast between this country and the rest of the world—notably the Communist part of the world. It could be quite fatally wrong.

In spite of what the American knows about the right of a man to live for himself, to live freely, to speak and believe and live responsibly, he usually is willing to speak only of economic freedom. "Public service" advertising repeats and elaborates a belief that classical free enterprise is the indispensable basis of democracy. Whether it is or not is an argument we are not going to get involved in at the moment. The point is that this belief has its logical conclusion in the "let's drop Sears, Roebuck catalogs on the Russians" school of political thought.

Two recent newspaper dispatches are interesting in the way they relate to this attitude. The *New York Times* has been publishing a curious series of reports on current conditions in Russia, written by their Moscow correspondent, Harrison E. Salisbury. They were transmitted with "unusual cooperation" from the Soviet authorities. One may gather that they report things the Soviets would like to have accepted in the United States, but there is no reason to believe that the reports are inaccurate as far as they go. One of them has to do with public opinion, and asserts repeatedly and elaborately that on the question of Soviet righteousness and United States criminality in international affairs, the majority of Soviet citizens have "no shadings of opinion . . . no doubts, no uncertainties, no qualifications." Salisbury says that he "has discussed the matter with Soviet citizens. Nothing in any of these conversations gives cause for belief that there is the slightest cleavage between the Soviet citizens and their government on this vital issue. Any supposition abroad that such a cleavage does in fact exist, or is likely to develop, is wishful thinking at best and may be extremely dangerous."

Another series of articles called "Freedom Fights Back" is appearing in the *Christian Science Monitor*. In one of them, Paul Wohl defines truth as the Russian people have traditionally defined it: "not the opposite of lie. Pravda, which means 'truth,' for Russians always has

meant more than a correct exposition of facts. It means purity of intention, selflessness, truth in the Biblical sense." The Russians, he says, are a people who are deeply attached to moral concerns, to ends rather than to means. Corruption and duplicity in their government does not scandalize them. Only a fool expects a temporal paradise. What matters is that the Soviet state appears to them to work in the long run for truth—for a society of justice and decency. And if there are wrongs and hardships on the way, the Russian people regard them as secondary to the goal.

So if one accepts the testimony of these two correspondents, the propaganda war is going to require more than the application of American advertising know-how. We will have to do more than count our bathtubs. We will have to speak of the basic political, religious, and intellectual freedoms that we have. We will have to find out what it is that makes life in a democracy more appropriate to man—moral man—than life in a totalitarian state. We will not be able to offer a dogma of democracy to the Russians, because the plural beliefs and desires of our society make our plurality next to the only thing we Americans (and English, and French, and free Europeans and Asians) have in common. But our plurality might be worth talking about. It is the fruit of the final single unity we do possess—freedom. That is really the only worth-while thing we have in our half of the world that cannot be had in the other. Our job is to convince the people of Russia that we do possess freedom. They will have to discover for themselves that they lack it.

Job for a Foundation

THE eight-page Catholic daily, the *Sun Herald* of Kansas City, Mo., which published its first issue, October 10, makes a pertinent suggestion to the new quarter-of-a-billion-dollar Ford Foundation in one of its first editorials. It recommends immediate study and some speedy answers to questions such as this: "How to get our surplus food crops to starving people all over the world instead of dyeing potatoes or hiding wheat or letting eggs rot. Where to find new homes for millions of people in Italy, Japan and other countries that are too overpopulated to support them as human beings." How to reach the Russian peoples themselves and what to tell them when we do establish contact.

Nehru's Independent Course

The Indian Prime Minister's policies
on Korea and Pakistan draw heavy fire.

By JEROME D'SOUZA

THERE is no doubt that the popularity of India's Congress Government has been steadily declining during the three years it has been in power. To some extent this was inevitable and was foreseen. No Government can fulfill all the pledges which it gives in a mood of enthusiasm during the election campaign. The Congress Government had made extravagant promises of prosperity and plenty for the common man soon after the achievement of independence.

Some of these pledges were by their nature incapable of fulfilment. But even their partial realization was made impossible by the peculiar circumstances in which independent India found herself from the very first. There was the refugee problem, the war in Kashmir, and the food crisis due partly to the failure of rains in parts of India during several years. Industrial development, too, has been impeded chiefly because Indian capital was shy, owing to the uncertainty about the Congress Party's social and economic policies and the dread of nationalization schemes.

The Congress Government has further drained its limited resources by costly experiments like prohibition, and the subsidies to handloom weaving—legacies from Mahatma Gandhi's social teaching, to which the Congress leaders cling obstinately. These experiments have meant less money for educational and scientific development. All this has brought about a progressive feeling of disillusionment and diminution of popularity for the Congress Government.

Nevertheless, there were sober elements in the country commanding wide influence who appreciated the special difficulties in which the new administrations were placed and who could ensure the return of Congress to power in the next elections. Above all there was the undiminished

personal popularity of Pandit Nehru and the certainty that the country wanted him as Prime Minister in the next parliament, the first to be summoned under the new Constitution. But events during the past year seemed to indicate a change even as regards these reassuring features. People began to ask themselves whether even sober elements were not moving away from the Congress Party and whether Pandit Nehru's undoubted popularity was not waning. What were those events?

In the first place there was the worsening of the relations between Pakistan and India. After the first orgies of murder and destruction, order had somehow been restored on the two sides of the frontier and an uneasy peace established. But the background of the Kashmir war and the unsolved disputes regarding the relative value of evacuee property in the two countries could at any time cause a flareup.

At the beginning of this year matters came to a crisis again. Unsympathetic treatment of Hindus in East Bengal and of Muslims in West Bengal led to fresh massive movements of refugees from either side. Stories of violence to life and property, and of forced conversions to Islam, inflamed the passions of Hindus in India to such a dangerous extent that there was actual talk of war between the two countries.

From this abyss the two countries were saved by a dramatic intervention by Pandit Nehru who met the Pakistan Premier, Liaquat Ali Khan, in Delhi, and after prolonged negotiations drew up the Nehru-Liaquat Pact by which peace was restored and machinery set up to solve communal disputes and facilitate the return of refugees. There was immense relief in the country. About the same time the UN appointed their arbitrator, Sir Owen Dixon, to settle the Kashmir question and under the goodwill generated by the Nehru-Liaquat Pact, there seemed to be good hopes of the settlement of that difficult problem also. Hindus who had left Pakistan started returning to their old homes and the Muslims, too, began to come back in large numbers. There was a new atmosphere of hope and cordiality in the country.

REV. JEROME D'SOUZA, S.J., of Madras, is a member of India's Constituent Assembly, and was a delegate from his nation to the last United Nations General Assembly.

BUT this did not last very long. Two Bengali Ministers of the Central Cabinet did not approve of the Pact. They thought that there was an element of one-sided appeasement in it which did harm to the Hindus. They moreover asserted that as usual the Muslims would not observe even the few promises they had made and that a more uncompromising policy in regard to Pakistan was essential. The chief spokesman in this behalf was Shyama Prasad Mukerjee who had been Minister of Industries in the Nehru Cabinet till his resignation in May. He was always known to be a man of strong Hindu sentiment. He stated that the Pact had not produced any improvement in the situation of the Hindus and he went on to attack the entire policy of Pandit Nehru and of the Congress Party on the Communal or the Hindu-Muslim issue. He went to the length of proposing a total exchange of populations so that there might be no Hindus left in East Bengal. This would have meant exchange of ten millions from either side. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee is an earnest and honest man. His campaign produced a deep impression on the Hindu public.

To this question of domestic policy was added the question of Nehru's foreign policy, particularly in regard to Korea. Hitherto, the only ones that attacked Pandit Nehru's foreign policy were the Communists and those who had fallen under the influence of Soviet propaganda. They did not approve of India's close adhesion to the UN, and his belief in its efficacy. They wanted a clear-cut break from the Western Powers on the plea that they were imperialists.

On the other hand even the Moderates were not in favor of open alliance with the Democratic countries. Hence the middle policy of independence in regard to the East-West blocs, with sympathy for the Democracies, was generally endorsed in the country. America's intervention in Korea brought about a change in many sections of public opinion. The instinctive distrust of any military intervention by Western Powers on the continent of Asia came to the surface again. Anti-American propagandists exploited it to the fullest extent. They represented the UN intervention in Korea as an American imperialist maneuver.

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PANDIT NEHRU'S cautious handling of the situation did not gain complete acceptance. When he finally approved the decision of the UN and ranged India with the other powers, there was misgiving and opposition in some quarters. An emergency session of the Parliament was requested to discuss the Korean and the Communal question. The session was held at the beginning of August. The House met in an atmos-

phere of uncertainty and vague surmise. It was felt that a strong challenge to Pandit Nehru's authority and conduct of affairs would be thrown up and that many elements in the House might range themselves definitely against him.

Shyama Prasad Mukerjee made himself the chief spokesman of the opposition. In a powerful speech he tried to show that the Nehru-Liquat Pact had failed and called for more vigorous policy towards Pakistan. Turning to the Korean question he condemned the Indian adhesion to the UN decision. That decision, he said, was really the work of American imperialists. The Koreans should be left to settle their own quarrels without the intervention of foreign troops. As to the UN's statement that there was aggression, they should not be impressed by it. Did the UN declare that Pakistan was an aggressor in Kashmir when the case was equally clear? Since the UN had one measure for Pakistan and another for Korea, the Prime Minister's policy of loyal support for the UN was not justified. That was the substance of Shyama Prasad's indictment.

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THE Prime Minister's answer was given in a long speech which showed that the vigor and fighting spirit of the 60-year-old leader had not declined. He showed with the aid of well established facts that the Pact with Pakistan had improved the situation and led to the return of many thousands of refugees. He emphatically asserted that its success would have been greater if people like Shyama Prasad had helped to carry out its provisions instead of criticizing them from the beginning.

He ridiculed the idea of mass exchanges of populations. There was no meaning in one-sided vigorous legislation in disputes of this kind. Either you go to war with Pakistan, which nobody wanted, or you negotiate with them as with an equal power, patiently trying to smooth out difficulties in the spirit of Gandhi's non-violence. There were rounds of applause when he declared that any attempt to change the secular character of the Indian State, to make it Hindu in the communal sense, and thus to deprive the minorities of the sense of security they now had, would be resisted to the utmost, resisted in the Council Chamber, on the public platform, and in the market place.

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THE Korean question had to be handled with greater delicacy. He admitted that India had some ground of complaint regarding the UN treatment of the Kashmir question. But the matter was still under discussion and they hoped to have a final settlement that would do justice to

India. That dispute should not blind India to the clear issues of the Korean question.

There, a United Nations Commission on the spot (of which commission an Indian was a member) had unequivocally declared that aggression had taken place. The Security Council had appealed for help at a moment when the aggression could be contained and prevented from spreading. India could not possibly ignore the decision and the appeal of the UN. He condemned the loose talk about America's imperialism and frequent misinterpretations of her motives. It was not a question of giving up our neutrality and aligning ourselves with a particular bloc but of the consistent pursuit of our policy towards Korea in the past, and towards the UN from the beginning.

★

AT THE end of the long debate the Prime Minister received an overwhelming vote of confidence. In Parliament at least it was clear that his authority was practically undiminished.

But what of the country at large? What of the Congress Party which, after all, had the last word on matters of policy and which had as yet made no official declaration after the recent developments at home and abroad? The opponents of Pandit Nehru thought that they would soon have an opportunity of showing their strength in a manner which the Prime Minister could not ignore. The election to the Congress Presidentship was fast approaching. After that election there would be the annual session of the entire Congress Party, a session that would bring more than 15,000 delegates from every part of India.

The election of a President who was not sympathetic to Nehru's ideas and a declaration by him of the need for new trends in Congress policy would definitely weaken the Prime Minister. Such a President could exercise great influence during this crucial year when the Party will have to prepare for the coming general elections. He would choose his Working Committee and they would appoint Parliamentary Boards who would have to approve the prospective party candidates. Indirectly he could do much to increase in the the provincial and central parliaments men who would not be sympathetic to the policies of the Prime Minister.

Among the candidates to the Presidentship, the foremost was Mr. Purushotam Das Tandon, an old and tried Congressman of high personal character, but a staunch and Orthodox Hindu who was known for his strong anti-Pakistan views. He was not an enthusiastic supporter of the Delhi Pact. In other ways, too, he represented the extreme right wing of the Congress and

had a good deal of sympathy for cultural ideals of the Hindu Mahasbaha.

It was known that Pandit Nehru did not favor his election as President. He preferred either one of the two other candidates. But the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Patel, was known to favor Mr. Tandon. After a close contest, Mr. Tandon was elected President. The situation contained the possibility of a rift in Congress ranks. The Socialists openly spoke of an alliance of all left-wing parties to profit by the rift and oust the Congress party from power at the next elections.

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ONCE again Pandit Nehru reacted with characteristic vigor. He declared that he had no personal objection to Mr. Tandon whose up-right character and long services to the country he appreciated. But he regretted that the election had been made the occasion for reactionary declarations and that certain "revivalists" had spoken of it as implying a rejection of Congress policy in regard to Hindu-Muslim relations. He insisted that the Congress Party should make an unequivocal pronouncement in confirmation of the fundamental policies of the Party at home and abroad.

Then, at the Party convention, Pandit Nehru was received by the great crowds with an enthusiasm that showed that he had lost nothing of his hold on the masses. In the Subjects Committee and in the open session of the Congress, his resolutions on the Indo-Pakistan Pact and on future relations between the two states and on India's foreign policy were carried with scarcely any dissent. To crown everything, the President, Mr. Tandon, in his presidential speech, came out with an unequivocal declaration on almost every point. Above all he affirmed that the Congress Party could not possibly give up its ideal of a secular republic, wherein every religious minority would be protected and encouraged, in preference to India's becoming a specifically Hindu State. Pandit Nehru had once again emerged triumphant.

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THIS means that he has not only a clear field before him during the 12 or 15 months of the remaining life of the present Parliament, but also he almost has the certainty of being returned to power at the next general election. That will give him six more years to control the destinies of India—a chance of solving her many intricate domestic problems, of confirming and stabilizing the democratic and non-sectarian character of the republic, and maintaining the independent line in foreign affairs which he has been pursuing with so much courage and fixity of purpose.

Fragments of Europe

Translations give us
glimpses, not the view.

By SERGE HUGHES

A TRANSLATION is similar to a chance conversation with a charming middle-aged woman. Both almost compel speculation as to what was, in contrast to what is, and in both instances the conclusions, if not quite wrong, are apt to be very uncertain. We change more than we dare realize, and the book that was is not the book that is. For what is a true translation? It is a new creation, inspired by a specific work of art, able to stand by itself alone, strong and harmonious in all its parts. Such translations, even rarer than the works which could inspire them, have no need of a prototype in order to be understood. But the others, the many translations, are those in which the past and the present, the artist and the critic, meet, leaving behind them, like forgotten things, the dissonance of two voices carefully enunciating together through one mask.

This sense of ambiguity present in most translations is not confined to the translations themselves but appears also in the needs which they fulfill. Those which fulfill a vital need are as few as are the real translations. The others are either indications of a common desire for novelty, or of the need of a publishing house for ready cash or the maintenance of a literary reputation.

To realize, then, just how strikingly varied are the motives which lead some works to be translated and others not, is to see how misleading is the trite observation that translations invariably reveal the prevalent mood of the country in which they appear. The only instance in which this is true is in totalitarian countries, and even there allowances must be made. There, translations either confirm the enforced ideology or are chosen as clear demonstrations of the decay and corruption of the country from which they are taken. Erskine Caldwell, James M. Cain and James Farrell, for example, can be read by the Russians in only one spirit and with but one quite obvious conclusion. But elsewhere, in republics where totalitarianism does not clearly dominate, how can the prevalent mood of a country be clearly pointed out? Pantheon and

New Directions, to mention the two which come first to mind, are certainly not interested in the same currents in literature. Does one reflect the prevalent mood more faithfully than the other? Or do neither, and is Farrar Straus or Knopf the more reliable witness? And who is to recognize with the required detachment and insight the prevalent mood? Tendencies can be discerned, but tendencies are sometimes volatile, and even they must be based on more than studies of translations.

But if translations are not mirrors of a country's dominant mood, still less are they reliable indications of the merit of their native country's literary activity. Italian literature of the eighteenth century, for example, considered weak in contrast to other periods by Italian critics, was quite popular throughout Europe at the time. The nineteenth century, on the other hand, which saw the magnificent rebirth of Italian letters with Foscolo, Leopardi and Manzoni, has never gained any wide popularity outside of Italy.

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BUT how the negations heap up! Translations are not this, they are not that. They do not truly translate, they do not give a necessarily accurate picture of their native literary currents, they do not necessarily determine us to ourselves. What do they do? Why translations?

Because of that reason which justifies so many ugly things in life: they are the lesser of two evils. Because it is better to be partly mistaken than to be totally ignorant. Because it is good to be aware of the constant attraction of provincialism. Because it is good that we be moved and excited from time to time by what is going on "over there." And finally because through the translations which appear we can appreciate the motley affair that is literature, and see how often the right thing is appreciated for the wrong reasons. For where else but in the field of translations could one find in the degree necessary for success the emphasis on weak points (o sex!), the deliberate toning down of the uniqueness of a work of art (nothing quite so difficult to understand as a work for all humanity) and the pushing of mediocre works which confirm a lethargic American public in the sloppy impression it has formed of a people?

As for the right thing being appreciated for the wrong reasons, Moravia's novels offer a per-

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fect and somewhat comical example. Moravia is one of a few Italian writers who are rightfully respected for an unusual degree of artistic integrity. A bitter moralist, whose pitiless analysis generally evokes a feeling of sad repulsion, he has seen two of his novels, *The Woman of Rome* and *Two Adolescents*, rise high on the best seller lists in America during the year. But the advertising layout used for these novels gives a satisfactory explanation for that popularity. In both cases, the center was occupied by a young lady not noticeably flat-chested. For *The Woman of Rome* the face was partly in shadow and meant to convey sultry, dramatic something. Beside her were the usual excerpts of praise from serious critics. For *Two Adolescents* virtuosity was pushed even further. Again the picture was of a robust young woman, but with something mysterious, motherly (the idea of chastity was conveyed by the mantilla she wore), looking down on the adolescents with a glance which reached new heights in creative advertising imagination.

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IT IS INTERESTING to note, however, that some of Moravia's works had been published here quite some time ago, at least fifteen years ago, and then received no particular attention. Certainly in the recent past Italian literature did not have the popularity it has achieved now. Since the publication of Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, Italian novels have continued to attract American readers. Novels such as *As a Man Grows Older*, *In Sicily*, *A Tale of Poor Lovers*, *The Woman of Rome*, and *Two Adolescents* have been read and discussed as signs of a literary revival in Italy. And the trend is to continue. There will be a republication of Moravia's *The Indifferent Ones* and the publication of some of his other works; his wife, Elsa Morante, is to see her prize-winning novel published shortly in America; Levi's new novel, *The Clock*, very well received in Italy, is to appear sometime in the near future; Elio Vittorini's fantasy, *The Twilight of the Elephant*, is also to come shortly; and, as a confirmation of all this activity, there will be published soon an anthology, *New Italian Writers*, short stories from the very fine Roman literary magazine, *Botteghe Oscure*.

Only the recent translation of a historical novel, Bacchelli's *The Mill on the Po*, reveals a completely different aspect of Italian literature. Bacchelli is of an older generation, and in this work, so careful and thorough and almost complacent, there are none of the qualities which mark contemporary Italian novels.

Just what it is that has made the American public turn to these authors, so different one from the other, is perhaps the feeling for loneliness they express, perhaps the feeling they convey of

a sense of deliverance from evil, or the bitter, virile, elegiac desperation with which they confront catastrophe and slow corruption. Their appeal is clearly a moral one. For all of the authors mentioned, from Svevo to Moravia, express in common a deep preoccupation with the increasing depersonalization of man, the fragmentation of his nature. For all, the task of literature is to deal with moral problems. How marked, in this respect, is the rupture of modern Italian writing with the virtuosity of D'Annunzio and even more with the Biedermeyer serenity of the early part of the century! It is, however, ironical that the man who since the turn of the century has fought tirelessly for a moral type of literature in Italy, Benedetto Croce, for the last fifty years the literary dictator, has apparently had no influence on these modern Italian writers. He does not share their preoccupation with the problem of personality and their morality represents a radical departure from the civic morality envisioned by him. Croce himself has found practically no following in America. Is the fact that he has never entirely outlived a Biedermeyer epoch and that the anguish and disillusionment of our times have never quite touched him, a partial explanation?

There is another aspect of Italian literature which, although it has not been translated, merits to be known by those who have a serious interest in the modern Italian literary scene. This includes some of the works of Aldo Palazzeschi, Savinio (the brother of De Chirico) and Guido Piovene. Palazzeschi's art is that of subtle, slow-moving introspection in a little provincial world; Savinio's is that of a brilliant essayist, witty and volatile; that of Piovene is closer to the type of poetical world familiar to the readers of Moravia.

★

IN contrast to the Italian situation, American interest in French works has been noticeably less this year than in the recent past. Sartre's popularity, together with that of his atheistic existentialism, has dwindled. Translations of Gide's *Journals* continue, a sign almost as bad as the publication of Somerset Maugham's notebooks, pointing to the caked earth at the bottom of the well, to the encrustation of anecdotalia around a body which is losing its strength. Apollinaire, Valéry, and Rimbaud have appeared, a tribute to a past distinguished generation. Even Stendhal has reappeared in American dress in a fine translation of an unfinished novel, the first part of which, *The Green Huntsman*, was published recently. Among the more recent novels is one by R. Frison-Roche on mountain climbing, *First on the Rope*, which has had great success in France and appears to be a good adventure story. By and large, however, French novels,

though written by such authors as Gracq and Ayme, have not had too great a following. There is still a constant interest in modern French poetry, however, as witnessed by a superb translation of some of St. John Perse's poems, and publishers' plans for the bi-lingual translation of other modern French poetry, among which will be a collection of Eluard's poems.

The authors commonly regarded as belonging to the Catholic revival have not been too well represented. A book by Mauriac on Proust is the first which comes to mind, together with some of his novels. There are plans to publish more of Mauriac and Julien Green, and certainly the future should see more translations of Bloy and Bernanos.

The greatest omission felt in the present is the lack of a translation of the works of Simone Weil, a brilliant Jewess who became a convert to Catholicism during the last war and who died, still young, the death of a martyr. Her works, deeply concerned with problems of grace and the idea of force, have made a profound impression in France and throughout Europe.

★

THE most disturbing aspect of European translations, however, is the ominous dearth of German works, aside from a scattered interest in Rilke and his contemporaries. Apparently there is simply no interest in the moderns. Yet it was a German, Herman Hesse, who was recently awarded a Nobel Prize in literature and that award, at least, has always aroused some type of interest. His novel, *The Glass Pearl Game*, like others of his works, has not interested the American public to any appreciable extent. Similarly the novels of Robert Musil, considered by English critics equal in importance to the novels of Joyce, are completely unknown to America. Musil and Hesse are only two of the names that come immediately to mind to someone who knows German literature in such a thin and superficial way as this writer, but there are others such as Ernst Junger and Herman Broch whose importance cannot be safely minimized. The common idea that in German letters this is the age of Thomas Mann, that he is a voice crying in the wilderness, has lasted too long for it to continue to be simply amusing.

The year has seen many good translations, and the coming year promises more. It is a good sign. It does not at all assure that we shall understand Europe better, but it does give us a better conscience to know that we are studying with somewhat greater care those fragments of Europe which have meaning for us. And so it should be, for as it has been said of Christians that they are spiritually Semites, it can be said of us that we are spiritually Europeans.

THE LABOR MOVEMENT

The Lost Perspective

IT IS hardly to be expected that men can write about the labor movement, or about anything else, without having ideas about it. It makes a great deal of difference, however, whether those ideas are preconceived or whether they are sufficiently malleable to be changed in shape and character and content by the materials of history they strike up against.

It is to be expected that the thing called the labor movement produces strong feelings in men, and that they react to it with vigor, that they are caught up into what they believe to be its vision, or are alienated by it, and deal with it with hostility. It is even to be expected that those who see in it, or saw in it once, a Moses leading to a promised land become captious, or even moan in betrayed and bitter and unrelenting anger if they think the vision betrayed and the glorious land receding, not to be occupied, not to be attained.

For, like a lover, they have made their own image; like a lover they have invested their social savior with imagined and perfect qualities. And since they have surrendered themselves wholly to the bright, resplendent image, the hurt goes deep when betrayal comes. For whoever thinks himself thus betrayed knows he has betrayed himself.

A good many of what men call intellectuals who have been attracted to our labor movement have never quite managed to see it through distinctly native American eyes. They have got drunk on Socialism and Fabianism or drugged on Marxism. They have not seen the labor movement as working out, in a pragmatic fashion, a distinctly American institution not merely against the constant and forceful opposition of management, but in a country whose prevailing mores were clearly middle class. Given that point of view the distinction of the achievement of the American labor movement earns respect. The amazing thing is not what it has not done but what it has done.

What it has done is not to destroy American capitalism but to preserve it. What it has done is so to transform American capitalism as to confound both management and the Marx-bound seer who denied both the premises which the labor leaders made and the conclusions which they brought, or helped to bring, about.

The American labor movement, its Communists forever gone, has become the knowing and vigorous leader of the free trade unions of the world. Given the absence of war and a less fearful and more knowing attitude in Washington the power of the American labor movement in Europe and in the East could and should be a vitalizing, saving and enriching force.

I DO NOT usually write in this fashion and I am not unaware of the ideological and ethical qualities of the labor movement. It has been cautious and timid and even corrupt. It has seemed backward and self-defeating and, as John L. Lewis would put it, stately and smug, self-satisfied and fat. I have used John Cort's column often to say this.

But Charles A. Madison has written a book which he has called *American Labor Leaders*. [Harper. \$4.] This book has provoked me to say some of the things it might not otherwise have occurred to me to put down.

Mr. Madison has conceived the idea of revealing to us our labor movement through a series of portraits of our more eminent leaders of labor. It is an imaginative and exciting device and he is, on the basis of his knowledge, equipped to exploit it.

It is possible to tell, through them, the hard story of our industrial workers; for the workers, through the telling, to discover to themselves their hard-won heritage. It is possible to tell this story to all of us, and all of us are in need of it. We are in need of it because it is well to know that in our shops and factories, our railroads and our mines, the unique, organized, spiritual force is the trade union. It is the union which permits men to learn and to know and to exercise government, to redress their just grievances, to change the character of their lives, to affirm and to fulfill themselves. It is possible to tell this story and to tell it well and this, on the whole, Mr. Madison has done.

But he has marred many of the portraits, changing and distorting the features, making them his idea of what he wants them or thinks them to be, making them unlike themselves and unrecognized by those of us who know them. Cromwell told his painter to paint him warts and all. Mr. Madison has invented warts where no warts ever were before.

★

HE has done this, I think, not because he is a dishonest painter, but because, like many painters of portraits before him, he has long lost perspective. I know only one place in which I find it difficult to account for his judgment from the facts. In truth he misleads us with all the facts before him—and that is in his treatment of the strike and internal fight in the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union in the mid-twenties. This whole struggle for power by the Communists, their almost ruin of the union, their defeat, is not a story told accurately by Mr. Madison. It is a private, party version which he tells, and it could have appeared in the *Daily Worker*.

He has lost perspective and the portraits he draws of Walter Reuther or Philip Murray, or William Z. Foster, or Harry Bridges are not accurate or true. If he be an honest painter, he is a man who, clinging to what he supposes to be a pristine, radical idea of America, of what America was and ought to be, has perverted values, lost his critical strength and our respect.

Some of this perversion is revealed in his characterization. He calls William Z. Foster, "the most astute

organizer in the American Federation of Labor." Whenever he is referring to Communists he calls them "radicals." He calls Matthew Woll and William Green "red baiters." He calls David Dubinsky "fanatically anti-communist" and accuses him "and his fellow leaders" as being "largely responsible for the split in the progressive forces of the United States." For "progressive" the astute must often read "Communist."

Harry Bridges is a convicted perjurer to whom Mr. Madison wants to give "the benefit of the doubt." Harry Bridges has not been convicted for what he believes but for denying that he believes it. Yet Mr. Madison can write this: "If one were to strip communism of its recent allegedly [sic] traitorous taint, there would be little essential difference between it and Bridges' radicalism. Both are based on the theory of the class struggle and both seek the ultimate replacement of capitalism by a socialistic form of society." As the Duke of Wellington said to the lady, "if you can believe that you can believe anything."

And believing anything Mr. Madison ends up doing. He believes that Philip Murray has "gravitated to the fleshpot philosophy of business unionism." He believes that the "ideological aims" of the CIO are now almost those of the American Federation of Labor.

★

GIVEN all these things and given the fact that the New York Times of October 18, 1948 reported the then "progressive" Henry Wallace as naming Walter Reuther as "the greatest single obstacle" to his party; the great enemy, for Mr. Madison, of all that is good and true is the present leader of the Auto Workers. His is a portrait not etched in acid but at which the whole bottle of acid is violently thrown. Mr. Reuther is "too ambitious and too vain not to be affected adversely by the power he now wields." He speaks of the "presumed alliance with the leftists" of Mr. Reuther's opponents in the UAW. He distorts the facts about Mr. Reuther's position on the merger of the Farm Equipment Workers. He speaks of the CIO speech of Mr. Reuther against the Communists as "a deliberate, opportunistic thrust," holding that Mr. Reuther knew better than to believe these union leaders "were agents of a foreign power." Why Mr. Reuther should know better than this I do not know since it is plain to most people. It is difficult to see how Walter Reuther is taking advantage of "temporary national hysteria" when the *Daily Worker* of June 27, 1948 could report a Michigan State CP resolution as follows: "Since 1939 our main line has been to weld a progressive coalition of Communist and non-Communist auto workers to isolate and defeat the Reuther policy and leadership." I wonder why Mr. Madison is unaware of this. The whole Reuther portrait is distorted and is conceived in anger and in hate.

It is a pity that what might have been a good book is so marred, that the brush was so often dipped in false colors, that prejudice has run so deep as to produce caricature.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

The Stage

Les Ballets De Paris

ROLAND PETIT'S choreography has achieved something of a popular success in this country largely because it has been bruited about that in his *piece de resistance*, "Carmen," which is performed nightly whatever the other changes of bill, we may expect some pretty sexy dancing. Mr. Petit delivers the sex all right, although I am not quite sure about the dancing. The bedroom sequence between Carmen and Don Jose certainly does have a lot of accuracy, though I am afraid it is of a literal rather than an evocative kind. The excitement it generates would seem to result more from the memories and anticipations which the audience brings with it to the theatre than from any inventiveness on Mr. Petit's part. That this is so becomes clear with the subsequent murder scene—potentially just as dramatic and with less audience memory to draw upon—out of which the choreographer derives no excitement at all.

Mr. Petit's work as a whole struck me as being a compound of the theatrical—in the sense of trick effects—and the literal. I have nothing against the theatrical when it is used as Menotti uses it, as a calculated shock to bring to surface awareness something much deeper going on underneath, but Roland Petit's tricks begin and end with themselves. As for literalness, the use of what looks like a dance movement to stamp out a cigarette serves only to reduce ballet to the copybook realism which has dulled the drama for years.

The sets for "Carmen" are wonderful, and Colette Marchand, especially in "L'Oeuf à la Coque," even more so. (*At the National*)

The Gioconda Smile

THERE is a structural flaw in Aldous Huxley's dramatization of his own short story which earlier kept it from being a first-rate movie and now keeps it from becoming a first-rate play. The difficulty is one of focus. We are interested, but not primarily, in the blundering husband who is falsely accused of murdering his wife. We are interested, but again not primarily, in the spinster neighbor who has actually done the murder out of love for the husband, and who, when he ups and marries a younger girl, takes her revenge by helping to convict him. Because Mr. Huxley has settled on neither character as the emphatic center of our interest, he gives us no point of view from which to watch the play and our attention is diffused when it should be most concentrated. Obviously, the play belongs to the spinster, since the husband is an essentially passive figure in the action,

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but Mr. Huxley has been unwilling to give it to her. Thus, in the third act, as the woman waits for the hour of the man's execution and her climactic struggle begins, Huxley feels it necessary to break the line of mounting tension and take us to the condemned man's cell, where we examine his private and dramatically irrelevant reactions. By the time we are returned to the spinster all momentum has been lost and the poor players must make a last-minute effort to generate fresh suspense.

The movie, called "A Woman's Vengeance," suffered less than the play from this division of interest. The fluidity of motion picture form permitted a quick and early dismissal of the jail scenes and allowed the final climax to build to a remarkable intensity. This was no doubt to be expected in a film version. What could never have been anticipated was that the film should be superior in every other detail as well, particularly in the acting and direction. Its cast, including Charles Boyer, Jessica Tandy, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, and Ann Blyth, were one and all more compelling than their present stage counterparts. The stage company contains a number of good actors, Basil Rathbone, Valerie Taylor, and George Relph among them. But only Mr. Relph achieves any authority, and none of them suggests any real relationship to another. Because they are good actors, the blame for their indifferent and disjointed playing must be assumed by director-producer Shepard Traube. Whatever its defects of story-line, "The Gioconda Smile" is a potentially successful melodrama for the theatre, but Mr. Traube has given it a slovenly and wasteful production in which not even the light cues seem to be coordinated. (*At the Lyceum*)

Pardon Our French

OLSEN AND JOHNSON have a fine sense of the irrelevant. It isn't the subtle and charming irrelevance of which Joe Cook was the master, it hasn't the character base of W. C. Fields' forays, and it is infinitely less intellectual than the Marx Brothers'. It is loud, low, and exclusively physical. But it is nevertheless real. When Chick Johnson accompanies an insipid little flower song by rocking back and forth in a chair to which is attached a ten-foot palm-leaf fan, there is evidence of an original and creative mind at work. It may be work that a more gifted mind would scorn to do, but I don't see how we can afford to pass over any genuine talent for the absurd, and I find that I am perfectly able to stand Olsen and Johnson once every three or four years.

This time they are not quite at full volume, partly because Ole Olsen has broken his leg—the one leg in the theatre we never supposed was going to be broken—and partly because they have essayed something closer in form to the standard revue. Whether they are trying to compromise with their critics or whether they have simply run out of ammunition, I don't know. It is, however, a mistake, and I assume that by the time this is

in print they will have trimmed down some of the straight production numbers and imported some more wild fowl. Perhaps they can borrow Roland Petit's pigeons.

For the sake of honesty, it must be admitted that all the verbal jokes in "Pardon Our French" are terrible. Chick Johnson must know they are terrible, he is saying them so unhelpfully. But I suspect things will brighten up when they get around to opening those trunks, and if Olsen and Johnson cannot remember their old jokes, I can, and will be happy to be of service. (*At the Broadway*)

WALTER KERR.

The Screen

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A DAME

IT WOULD be silly of course to think that "All About Eve" really gives the complete lowdown about women; but it tries hard in its limited way and it manages to be a very entertaining movie. I suspect that women will like it better than men; the American male (not necessarily the one interviewed by Kinsey) is inclined to be a little squeamish about films and books that knock the venerated mom-wife-sis image off its pedestal. It must be noted at once, however, that the women in "All About Eve" belong to a special group: those connected with the theater. And if we accept this film's portraits as being true to life, we must also accept the script's statement about theater folk being the original displaced personalities.

★

"ALL ABOUT EVE" has the most realistic theatrical background I have ever seen in a movie; and if its people, the actors, producers, directors, writers, critics, etc., aren't as sweet as the little Evas we usually see on stage and screen, well, then maybe the little Evas have been too one-sided in their characterizations. The plot of "All About Eve" is extremely complicated; it concerns mainly a group of theatrical folk who befriend a seemingly sweet young girl who soon turns out to be another guest in the house. This viper whom they have nourished in their bosoms tries to steal a famous actress' place on the stage; she even tries to steal this actress' fiancé, and then failing that she attempts to snag a playwright and blackmail his wife. It must be admitted that all these people whom Eve treats so shamefully aren't exactly angels—but who is? They are human, though, and have hearts; and at the end of the season when Eve receives a little gold statue as the Sarah Siddons award for distinguished achievement on the stage, the famous actress tells Eve she can put this statue where her heart ought to be.

The acting throughout this extraordinary movie is

exceptional. I think Anne Baxter as the vicious Eve has an assignment too difficult for any actress: the role is too calculating, too mean; but Miss Baxter handles it well and at times succeeds in making this heartless caricature a living person. As the great actress at the peak of her career, Bette Davis gives what may well stand as the finest performance of her high-standard career. Miss Davis gives the role depth and meaning, honesty and warmth; her actress is temperamental, disillusioned about fame, insecure about her hold on her fiancé (who is eight years her junior), pleased with her success on the stage, discontent about her discovery that "all females have to work at being a woman." You may notice more than a touch of other famous actresses in this portrayal, but it is to Miss Davis' credit that she has created a well-rounded characterization of an aging woman who suddenly realizes that even a successful career is not entirely a satisfactory substitute for a whole life.

★

AS this actress' good friend and the wife of a famed playwright, Celeste Holm gives another of her fine portrayals, with just the right amount of sweetness tempered with a realistically fiery quality that makes her human. The scene in the ladies' room at the Stork Club is one of the film's best; and the control and timing of Miss Holm's voice, when she realizes that Eve is blackmailing her, is absolutely perfect as she asks in astonishment: "You'd do all that for a part in a play?"

Although the men in this movie are exceedingly well

cast, they seem to come off second best to the women. Gary Merrill is properly virile and vigorous as the director who is also Miss Davis' fiancé. And in a quiet sort of way, Hugh Marlowe is likable and weak as Miss Holm's playwright husband. As the drama critic, George Sanders is impressively impeccable in a toil-not-neither-do-I-spin manner, but the role is not convincing; and as the only person who really sees through Eve, you almost dislike him and his insatiable ambition as much as you would dislike and fear a person like Eve.

★

HIGHEST praise must go to Darryl Zanuck for his film's splendid production, and of course to Joseph L. Mankiewicz who wrote and directed the script. In spite of the script's brilliance (it is jammed with witty cracks about people and theater) it is too long. No doubt the film's makers are aware of this, but they probably couldn't stand cutting out any of the sparkling dialogue (Thelma Ritter as Miss Davis' maid has some gems) or any of the truly moving cinema. In fact Mr. Zanuck is so pleased with his movie that he is starting a new policy for it: moviegoers will not be admitted to the theater after the film has started. This is a policy I approve of heartily not only for this movie, but for all good movies. And "All About Eve" can certainly be called a good movie by anyone who agrees that it was made by men who think that this is how women think about the way women think.

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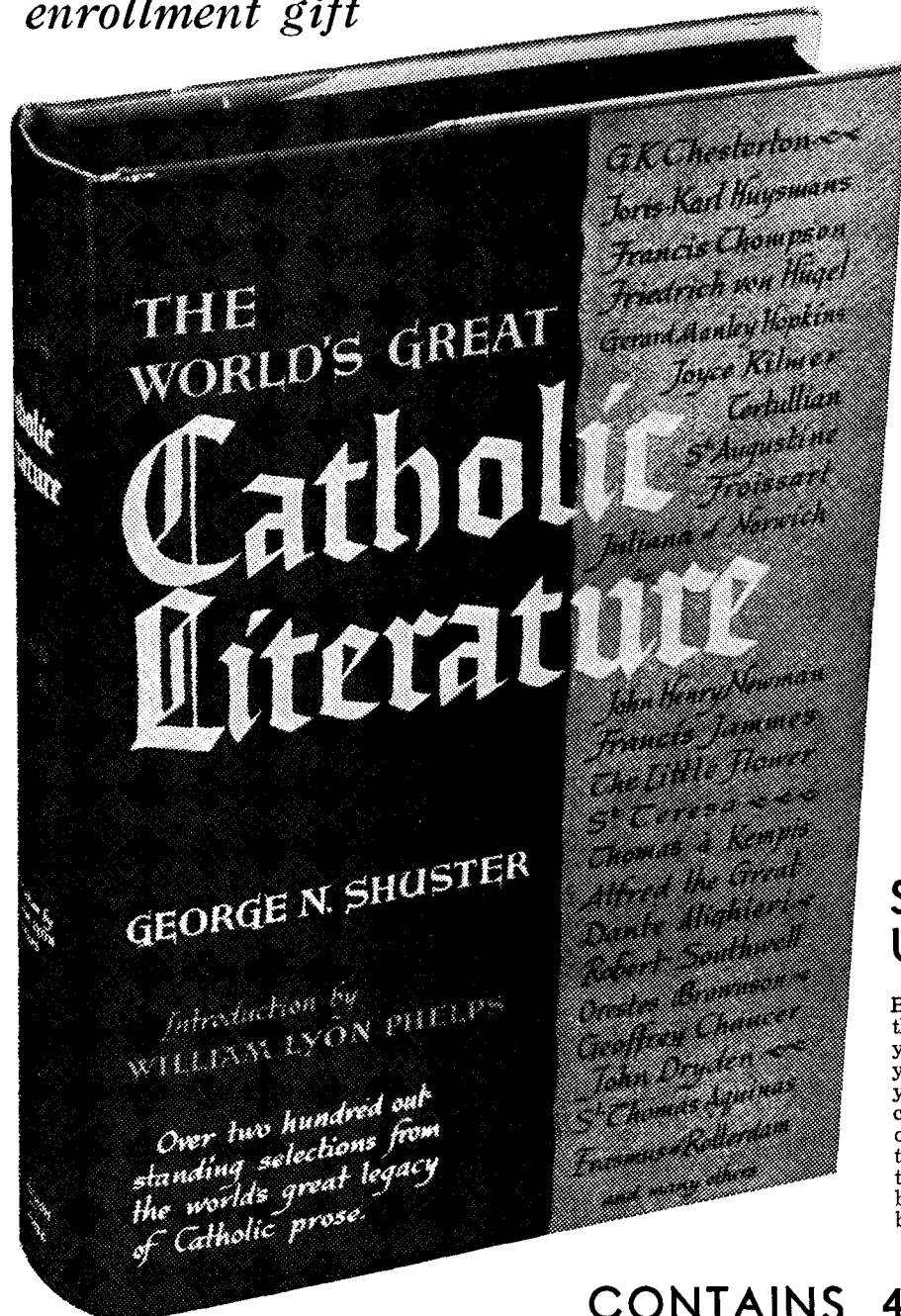
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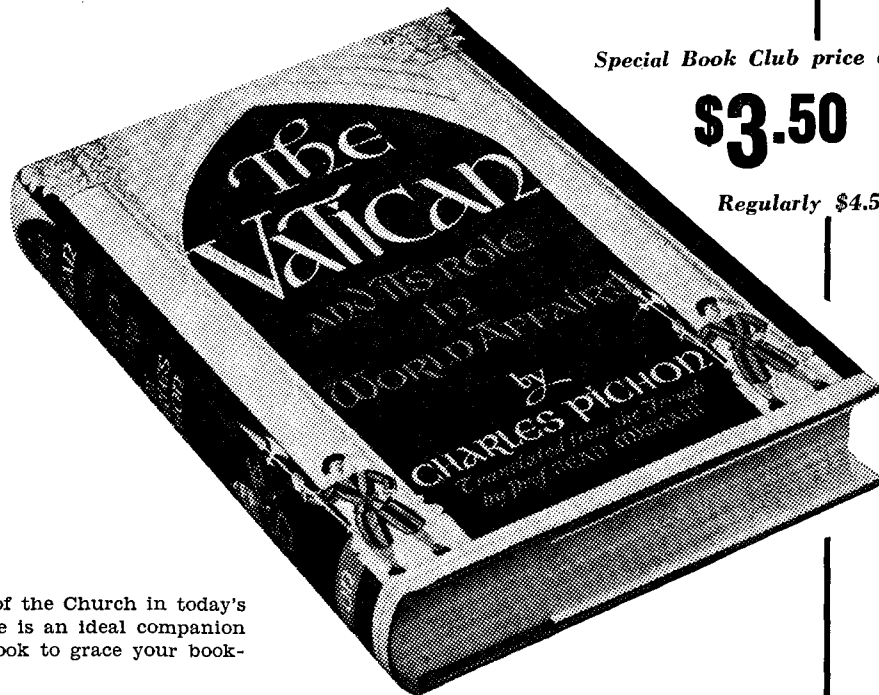
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The Uncommon Man

By ED WILLOCK

IN THE story of the boy who cried "Wolf!" too often, there is a minor moral that generally escapes attention. The shepherd boy lost his life. We can't say that it taught *him* a lesson, but we can abstract the warning that all those who exaggerate may eventually find themselves without an audience. The point that is sometimes missed is that the townsfolk also came out badly in the deal. They lost some sheep and a shepherd. The fact that they tired of listening was tough on the shepherd, but it was also tough on those who closed their ears to the one cry that was on the level.

This moral is worth remembering on the occasion of the re-emergence of G. K. Chesterton into current print. [*The Common Man*. Sheed & Ward. \$3.] The publishers have unearthed some essays, very few of which you are likely to have read. It seems that the original Fat Man (original as distinct from Sydney Greenstreet and Gideon Fells) became easily detached from his MSS. after they were written. These are now being found and *The Common Man* is a compilation of forty-four such items.

The most important point to be made in reference to this publishing event is to beg those for whom these pages will be an introduction, or a re-introduction, to forget Chesterton and just read what he says. This is precisely the kind of thing that might have saved the day as well as the sheep and the shepherd on the occasion of the last long cry of "Wolf!" If there had been anyone in the town for whom the cry of "Wolf" was merely a warning and not a gag, everyone would have been better off. The shepherd, in one sense, was not killed by the wolf, but by his reputation. If there is anything that will kill Chesterton it will be his reputation, and if he dies it may not be the cause but it will be evidence of the illness of Christian civilization.

★

WHAT explanation can there be for the fact that in one city (and for all I know, in many others) there is a Chesterton Club that is unfamiliar with the *Outline of Sanity* and does not know that G.K. was a social reformer with a manifesto? How explain the fact that on the occasion of his death in 1936, a diocesan paper front-paged a eulogy of "The Defender of the Faith" while on the back page they featured a full-page ad for a local department store which chronically underpaid its help—and this without apology or explanation?

ED WILLOCK is one of the founders and editors of *Integrity*.

No one seemed to know that Chesterton was the arch-enemy of department stores. Chesterton himself could not explain satisfactorily the event which transpired on the occasion of his debate with the owner of a department store in London. After Chesterton had spent his eloquence on the hallowed rights of little people and small proprietors versus the immutable might of giant corporations, his opponent smilingly offered G.K. the opportunity to sit in a show window of his department store and sketch people to aid the sale of his books. Chesterton blankly and bleakly muttered "How jolly!"

★

GOD knows why it is that Chesterton has been taken so lightly. Perhaps it is because he took himself so lightly. Belloc thought it was because he was charitable—animosity has a longer life than amiableness. Possibly he did overdo his paradoxes. He undoubtedly was an exhibitionist. I'm inclined to think that these are secondary contributions to the development of his misleading reputation. Nearer to being primary is the aversion that the literary have for the doctrinaire. It is so easy to assign the Chestertonian bulk to the category of a "giant of literature" and a "giant of religion" so as to avoid the embarrassment of facing the fact that he spent his life and his money espousing an unpopular creed called "distributism." In this way literature gains another star, and doctrinaire ideas or *avant garde* attitudes may still be regarded as the preoccupation of lunatic fringes and mediocre minds. The culture vultures have

gained a victory by annexation.

To say a man is a good man or a great poet are compliments, but not every compliment is complimentary. Those who say that Christ was a good man do Him no honor. Those who say Chesterton was a great poet may do so to obscure the fact that he was a greater prophet.

★

NEWMAN anticipated a Second Spring. Chesterton was the man who wrote the first letter to *The Times* which enclosed a sprig of pussy willow verifying the vernal fact. He made us aware of the *wonder* of God's creation right at a time when the attitude had shifted from curiosity to cynicism. Wonder is the placenta upon which the Christian foetus will grow. He was the first starry-eyed prophet since Francis of Assisi. His wonder may have been elementary, but it is elementary in the sense of being fundamental.

He could have saved Catholics from that awful chore of trying to be as smart as other people by simply reminding them that no more is expected of them but that they be themselves. He could have given us the levity to rise above the apparent immutability of the shortest era in history (the industrial era) so that we might wonder about what went on before and ponder about what will follow after. For him nothing was "here to stay" except the Church and human nature, and their mutual love affair.

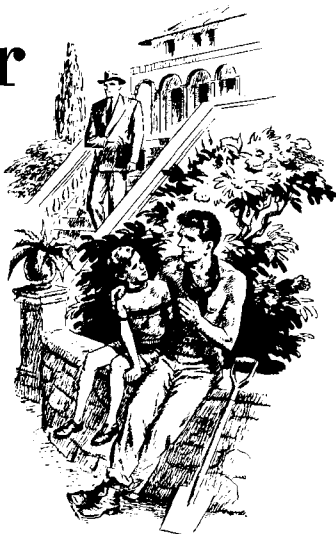
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Echoes of Two Waughs

By **JOE DEVER**

SOMETHING of distress, swiftly passing, yet acute, came into his features when the finger bowls were not forthcoming.

"But we do not use finger bowls at a Saturday night supper of beans and tossed salad," one wanted to say. "In fact, most of us do not own finger bowls," one could have added dejectedly.

Then there was the hot-blooded professor who, when asked if he'd like to be introduced, shouted across the waves of his martini: "No! I do not wish to be insulted."

And there was, as always, the intense young man from the English Department who had the question to ask concerning *A Handful of Dust*.

"We had many discussions about the ending. What did it *really* mean?"

"Read it *agayne*," the great comedian said, "it's all there."

There was, on occasion, the illusion—at once pleasant and disturbing—that you were an extra, if not a principal, in the shooting of a scene from one of his books. He, seemingly as omniscient in actual living as in the novel, setting the mood and tempo, holding all the strings and manipulating them when ready.

He came and went, infuriating the self-conscious and the jingoistic, amusing and nettling the discerning. He came in archness, bristles, and with an inevitable sweetness that could disarm the cautious, winning them to his standards—the cane umbrella and the derby hat.

And, as always, when he had gone, the provincials were left in their provinces—a little thrilled, a little awkward, a little worried by that eternal danger of the literate contemporary: the confusion and identification of the artist with his art.

But for the present—the articles and provocative press statements having rumbled away—he has obviated our wonder and apprehension with a novelized biography of one of the saints of the early Church.

★

WITH *Helena* [Little, Brown. \$2.75], Evelyn Waugh may have written his most curious book, a work both consciously puckish and consciously devout. In a skilful and honest preface Mr. Waugh points out the historical obscurity of Helena's life and times. He speaks of "echoes and reflections . . . scattered about the following pages."

JOE DEVER is a novelist and short story writer whose home is in Chicago.

And that is the kind of book *Helena* is—echoes of the comic Waugh, reflections of the devout Waugh.

Helena will make historians grind their teeth—as do most novelized biographies. A reading of the life-sketch of Helena in both the *Catholic Encyclopedia* and Butler's revised *Lives of the Saints* conveys that she was not English in origin nor was she the daughter of Old King Cole. But Waugh clearly indicates in statement and in craft that his book is a legend—a legend, very probably, about a legend, which is all to his credibility.

You can say this and that about novelized biographies—what they should and should not be. You can put numerals in front of your points and subdivisions, but, happily, nobody completely knows what a novelized biography should be.

In the instance of the current Waugh, the rules are even more elusive. His preface gets rid of his duty to the facts about Helena, most of which have not survived. We are then left critically, I suppose, with two expectations: Helena should emerge as a saint; and the Waugh prose style should be masterful, as before.

When Waugh's Helena wasn't a saint, early in the book, she was a much more real and engaging person. In those sections, he does up the medieval mead hall, in cameo, as well as Undset did it in panorama—with his own flavor added.

★

HIS analysis of the outdoor woman's passion for hard-riding is blunt and percipient, without heavy-handed naturalism. There is writing here and in the other early pages wherein one detects a certain unleashed realistic strength not previously experienced in the same writer:

... Helena rode Pylades; she sat astride and the saddle-tree solaced her man-made hurt; whip in hand, rein in hand, the air of her home sweet in her nostrils. The smell of the hunt, compact of horse-sweat and warm harness, new leaf and old leaf trodden together; the call of the horn; the horse-life under her, between her thighs, at her fingers' ends; everything of that tangy British morning contended with the memories of the night and seemed in those last free hours to heal her maidenhead.

And the scenes at the court of Constantine in Rome are highly regaling in the tradition of Waugh's satirical novels. In one of several comic-Waugh sideshows, Helena says to her son Constantine:

"My dear boy, what on earth have you got on your head?"

The face on the collar assumed an expression of alarm.

"On my head?" He put up a hand as though to dislodge some bird which might inadvertently

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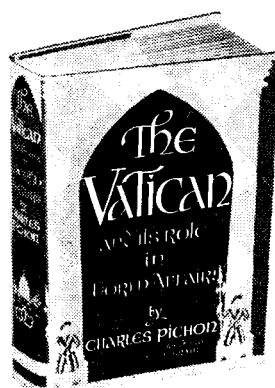
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have perched there. "Is there anything on my head?"

"Two courtiers danced forward. They were shorter than Constantine and made little jumps to see what was amiss. Without excess of ceremony Constantine inclined to them.

"Well, what is it? Take it off at once, whatever it is."

The courtiers craned and peered; one raised a finger and touched. They looked at one another. They looked at the Empress Dowager in abject consternation.

"That green wig," said Helena.

★

SUCH a wig hides several bald spots in the work. For later, the holier Helena goes quite wooden on us. For example, when she is asked, concerning her stubborn search for the true cross: "Do you really think that in all this you will be able to find a hole in the ground and a piece of wood?"

"Oh, yes, I think so," said Helena cheerfully.

This is a book that rewards you with flashes of spiritual insight and provokes several Waughish belly-laughs. Yet it sobers you, too often, in a way that a distinguished writer should not make you sober.

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Books

Psychoanalysis and Religion. Erich Fromm. Yale. \$2.50.

THE author, a well-known psychiatrist and the author of *Escape from Freedom* and *Man for Himself*, returns in this volume of his Dwight H. Terry Lectures at Yale, to a topic he discussed to some extent in the second of his books. There, he dealt with the psychological foundations of ethics and endeavored to arrive at a general and obligatory system of morals by way of an analysis of human nature. He obviously hoped thus to avoid the untenable relativism of most naturalistic ethics and, at the same time, to escape the necessity of a supernatural foundation of morals. He elaborates on this problem in his latest work and particularly tries to show that Freudian psychoanalysis is compatible

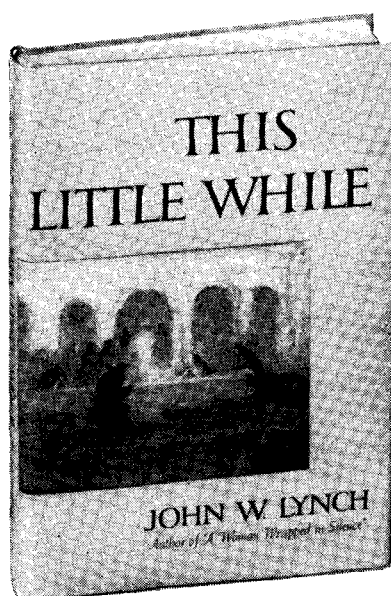
with and even leads to a religious conception of human existence. This end he thinks to achieve by stressing the distinction between "authoritarian" and "humanistic" religion, as he had previously distinguished the same two types in ethics.

Religion is defined as "any system of thought and action shared by a group which gives the individual a frame of orientation and an object of devotion." Religion as it is commonly understood indeed fulfills these conditions; but it is questionable whether it is adequately defined by this formula. Particularly, the interpretation given to the so-called authoritarian religion is quite unsatisfactory. The author holds that the central concept in such religions is that of God as the legislator and the supreme power. The aspect of deity as the supreme good is altogether absent. Nor does Dr. Fromm do justice to the notion of divine love. He has an incomplete knowledge of "negative theology"; in this regard he refers to Plotinus, Maimonides, and

Eckhart, apparently without realizing that there is a large amount of text on this matter and that the passage he quotes from Eckhart is but a quotation from Saint Augustine.

IF the author's remarks on religion are totally inadequate, one must recognize that there are many passages which deserve consideration. It is surely true that the idolatry of the state in totalitarian countries, or of the machine, and of success that is chiefly the acquisition of wordly goods, which prevail in our day, are the very opposite of religion. One is also grateful for his pointing out that the psychology or philosophy of G. C. Jung is, in truth, no closer to true understanding and appreciation of religion than is the doctrine of Freud. Many readers have been misled by certain remarks made by Jung, and view this psychologist as favorable to Christianity.

By defining religion as he does, and thus excluding all which commonly is included in this term, Dr. Fromm



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Father Lynch is the priest who wrote the outstanding tribute to Our Lady, *A Woman Wrapped in Silence*, now in its thirteenth printing. \$3.00

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has no difficulty in claiming that Freud's conception of human nature leaves space for religious attitudes. The argument is, however, not at all convincing to anyone who understands religion differently. Neither religion nor ethics are sufficiently defined if the notion of a supreme good is eliminated. Without some sort of an absolute, no system of morals can be established.

Dr. Fromm is very serious about advocating humility and brotherly love. But it remains doubtful whether his reasoning will convince anyone that man has an obligation to behave in such a manner. The only obligation the author seems to recognize is that of the individual towards himself. It is quite true that "adjustment" is not a supreme value and that it is sometimes necessary to be "maladjusted." This is, however, only a restatement of the precept that man has to obey God more than his fellows. The conceptions of ethics and religion harbored by Dr. Fromm leave unexplained and unfounded precisely that which he

wishes to safeguard—the obligatory nature of the moral law. All his efforts notwithstanding, his ethics are bound to end in a complete individualism. It may be that he considers this the highest form of human existence, because of the manner in which he understands "freedom." His freedom is surely not that of "the children of God."

Because of his arbitrary definition of religion his attempt to prove the compatibility of psychoanalysis and religion is bound to fail. After reading this book one is more convinced than ever before that the doctrine of Freud and true religion are as far from one another as any two things may be.

RUDOLF ALLERS.

The Trouble of One House. Brendan Gill. Doubleday. \$3.

ELIZABETH ROWAN fell victim to cancer, and this book is about the day she died. Mrs. Rowan

was the wife of a prosperous doctor and the mother of three growing children. She was the sister of Margaret Delaney, a bitter childless woman married to an undertaker. She was the spiritual daughter of Monsignor Brady, one of those easy-going, easy-living pastors as much at home at the country club as in the sacristy.

There were others in Elizabeth's life at the end: young Father Degnan, an overfed bumpkin of a priest who foolishly fainted when she died; her devoted physician, Dr. Ben Maher, impotent and introvert; her nurse, Miss Gately, for a time, Elizabeth knew, the other woman in her husband's life, now a sullenly promiscuous tramp; Mary Hagerty, unwashed, unloved, unwanted, the housekeeper who dreamed wildly of becoming mistress of the house, with Mrs. Rowan out of the way; brooding Norah Martin, the friend from school days, who had secretly loved Elizabeth's husband for years.

For all these people Mrs. Rowan had been the living symbol of love.

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Love had always come as easy as breath to Elizabeth, and even when she knew exactly what they were and what they were up to, she poured it without cost on all of them. The love they took greedily from her, like the hungry people they were, was a sweetness in their lives, but a bitter affront too. It pointed up their pettiness and the dry desperation of their days. Love gave Elizabeth a power which those around her both respected and resented. "Look at you, the perfect wife and mother!" her husband told her once. "I'm much to be envied, aren't I? Everyone tells me how much I'm to be envied. But I know this, I know it would be easier living with someone who couldn't love at all than living with you, who never stop loving, who never stop smothering the children and me in love. I know there are times when it's worse than hating to love as you do—times when you're like a growth running wild, eating us, like a sponge swallowing us up, making us yours." And the children, too easily forgiven, said: "You don't understand. You don't ever understand."

When she died, the fresh memory of Elizabeth's prodigious love for them turned out to be like a merciless lamp that lighted all the secret corners they thought were decently hidden. The memory of her brought shame, resentment and ultimately despairing remorse to each of them.

Love, the author seems to be saying, love the great embarrassment, the blasted nuisance.

MR. GILL'S ironic theme is worked out a little too patly to be wholly convincing, like much thematic fiction. And the character of Elizabeth is woefully under-developed. One has the right to expect evidence of that great power to love and be loved. But Elizabeth comes off rather like the kind of woman Greer Garson made into a stock movie character a few years ago: wise, with soap-opera wisdom; gracious, with genteel suburban grace; charming, with the static charm that goes with tea rooms and silverware ads.

Her power is never really communicated, except by declaration. When the time came for *The Caller*,

the parish bulletin, to run Elizabeth's obituary, Father Degnan, the curate, said: "We just ought to explain why people loved her—why we all loved her." "But we couldn't say that," the Monsignor answered, "We don't know how to say it. It's too hard to say." And Father Degnan said: "Then we can't say anything that matters. We'll have to run an ordinary obituary, like the daily papers; and the shorter the better."

But this last isn't true of the novel about Elizabeth Rowan. It has its high moments, mainly in the chain of memorable vignettes the author relies on to tell his story. They are sharply focused, deft in detail and powerful in the single effect that each one evokes. Brendan Gill is master of the *New Yorker* short story. Yet, admirable as his vignettes are, considered separately, they do not add up to a masterful mosaic. The separate bangs don't total up to the one big boom. The reader is left with glimpses when, by the rules of the game, he has been led to expect a long, long look.

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HARPER & BROTHERS
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An Edith Wharton Treasury. Edited by Arthur Hobson Quinn. Appleton-Century-Crofts. \$5.

SINCE the few remaining mansions on Fifth Avenue in private hands which haven't already been pre-empted for apartment sites will very likely be turned into orphan asylums before we are very much older, it may seem presumptuous to insist on the timeliness of a novelist who will be remembered, if she is to be remembered, as the chronicler of life behind facades destined either to shelter educational institutions or to crumble any day at the hands of the wreckers. Yet Edith Wharton, as will be obvious to anyone who dips into the treasury which Professor Quinn has just edited, is the bearer of a message too vital to be ignored even in an age when nobody dresses for the opera. Unlike Dreiser and the other realists, whose angry indictment of the injustices of capitalism wearies those of us who realize that no system of government is ideal, Mrs. Wharton subtly emphasized the perennial struggle for self-expression of the individual in whatever society he finds himself.

Mrs. Wharton's finer novels, which we are too ready to dismiss as period pieces in 1950, will perhaps be re-read in the not too distant future as ageless interpretations of the dilemma of sensitive personalities in a confining world, and Mrs. Wharton who was too wise to sneer at the dinner parties whose solemnity so amused her, would be the first to agree that pomposity is not likely to disappear from the earth no matter how violent may be the revolutions which confront ourselves and our descendants.

Professor Quinn's excellent anthology, which includes such old favorites as *The Age of Innocence*, *The Old Maid*, *Xingu*, and *Autre Temps*, ought to remind us that Mrs. Wharton was much more than a social historian in her novels and short stories; expert as she was, and no one was more expert in setting the stage in which the American leisure class of the last hundred years acted out their role, she was far too sympathetic with the conventions of the

THE THIRD HOUR

Issue V

Going to press and soon to be sent to our subscribers, this issue presents important contributions by distinguished writers, laymen and religious, belonging to Christian intellectual circles in America and Europe:

Nicholas Berdyaev: *From Posthumous Papers*. W. H. Auden: *A Circumlocution (Poem)*. Bishop John of Brooklyn: *On Mercy Killing*. Fr. Jean Danielou: *In Memory of Emmanuel Mounier*. Ursula M. Niebuhr: *The Vocation of the Christian Disciple*. Dorothy Day: *An Agronomic University*. Denis de Rougemont: *Plan of a Trinitary Meditation on Art*. Dom Raphael Walzer, O.S.B., Archabbot of Beuron: *Edith Stein (Philosopher, Carmelite, Martyr)*. Gerda Blumenthal: *Simone Weil and the Cross of Dividedness*. Helene Iswolsky: *From Commitment to Oblation*. Basile Yanovsky: *The Short Life of a Synthetic Man (A Play)*. Patrice de la Tour du Pin: *From The Dedicated Life in Poetry*. Anne Fremantle: *Out of Africa*. Fr. Jerome D'Souza, S. J.: *The Spirit of New India*. V. Ryabushinsky: *The Russian-Orthodox Icon*. Arthur Lourie: *Moussorgsky*. Fr. John Tarashevitch, O.S.B.: *The Christian East and the Benedictine Ideal*. I. de Manziarly: *Prayer*.

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conservative and far too understanding of the rebellion of the dissatisfied, to be relegated to the rank of a scene shifter.

Since Mrs. Wharton was so often a finished artist, it is all the more regrettable that she was so seldom a competent critic of her own work. If she had published less, and she was under no financial stress at any time, she might have claimed much sooner the critical appreciation to which she will eventually be entitled. Professor Quinn would have written a far more telling introduction if he had honestly faced this problem.

WAYNE ANDREWS.

A Fearful Joy. Joyce Cary. Harper. \$3.

TABITHA Baskett, the heroine of Joyce Cary's new novel, is as adaptable a woman as ever muddled through an eventful lifetime. Born of a respectable English family, she strays from one vaguely indecorous situation to another, and the catalogue of her adventures sounds suspiciously like Mr. Cary's version of Recent Social Trends.

At seventeen, out of suburban boredom, Tabitha runs off with a flashy scoundrel named Bonser, and tours the countryside with him as he bilks landladies and sells worthless stock to the local citizenry. This is at the height of the Victorian period—obviously not the prim, overstuffed Victorian period, but its lustily wicked counterpart. Toward the end of the century, she becomes the mistress of a wealthy patron of the arts. Surrounded by a coterie of bickering artists and authors, she and her patron publish a *fin de siècle* literary journal dealing heavily in decadence and usually heavily in debt.

Decadence goes out of fashion, and Tabitha marries a crotchety iron and steel manufacturer. Her husband builds an industrial empire on a non-descript financial structure, just in time to reap tremendous profits from the first World War. His talents for organization bring him into the Ministry of Supply as production chief, and Tabitha's guests are now

financiers, cabinet ministers, and duchesses. But in the post-war crash, the empire crumbles, her husband dies, and Tabitha finally marries Bonser, the unreconstructed swindler of her youth. Always eager for a quick shilling, Bonser takes her money to buy an unfashionable hotel and transforms it into a shady road-house. Tabitha becomes manager of the establishment.

She queues up for rations during the second World War, subsidizes her granddaughter's shaky post-war

airplane enterprise, and by the end of the novel, has merited at least honorable mention as the Woman of the Half-Century.

OUT of this lavishness of plot and personalities, Mr. Cary has fashioned a warm and honest story. Tabitha's adventures may be as numerous as those of a serial heroine, but she herself does not see beyond the daily concerns of humoring her family, her son's perpetual colds, and the peccadilloes of her grand-

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daughter. She remains an ordinary, unreflective woman, immersed in a life that is always real and earnest. If she is neither very bright nor very interesting, she at least has the resilience to welcome each new event with unembittered eagerness.

Mr. Cary has a nostalgic fondness for the hearty virtues and vices of the unorthodox, and as in *The Horse's Mouth*, he writes of them with enthusiasm. Bonser is a rollicking individual, spending everyone's money with gay-hearted recklessness, telling the son he abandoned how he insisted on sending him to Oxford, drinking and boasting, and periodically turning up with unabashed good humor, demanding to know why Tabitha hasn't written. Even as he lies dying of alcoholism and dissipation in a cheap brothel, he can laugh at the world.

For the fads of the chilly modern era, the author has a more biting satire. Tabitha's daughter-in-law is almost a caricature of the college-bred woman of the twenties, with her

endless committees and her resentment of the child who threatens to interfere with her career. In the throes of modern psychology, she insists that kissing and prayers are old-fashioned evils that her daughter must be spared. When Tabitha brings picture books of Bible stories, and is found to have been surreptitiously kissing the child in the park, she is banished from the antiseptic modern household.

There is humor and insight in *A Fearful Joy*, and skilful description. Mr. Cary is one of the few people who can write in the present tense without sounding like a sophomore translation from the Latin. There is certainly a profligacy of incident and social comment. But Tabitha is too dull and too frail a person to hold the novel together. The episodes tend to fall into isolated tableaux of the passing scene. Mr. Cary has warm sympathy for his erring humans, but their general ordinariness and unpleasantness make it difficult to care much about their

fortunes. Evidently even the person who wrote the synopsis on the book jacket could not work up enough interest to read the novel through; he has credited Tabitha with an extra marriage and two gratuitous divorces.

CAROL H. WEISS.

Back. Henry Green. Viking. \$3.

IF MORE successful manufacturers were novelists like Henry Green and fewer successful novelists merely manufacturers, things might look a little brighter both on the assembly line and in the book reviewing business.

Under that pseudonym—possibly a device against being looked down on as an odd, writing bloke in the Birmingham, England, industrial circles in which he normally travels—Mr. Green has written eight novels. Two of them, *Loving* and *Nothing*, have been published here and received enthusiastic critical praise for

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The one-word title (*Mr. Green* takes a practical, business-like attitude toward this matter of titles) is used here as an adverb, and refers to Charley Summers, a repatriated prisoner of war. Charley returns to England still in love with the girl who died while he was away. He is assaulted on every side by poignant but painful memories of her. Through a set of circumstances, perplexing of course to Charley, but worked into a good plot by the author, he meets another girl so like his own Rose he cannot believe it is not she, somehow deceiving him. Charley's natural bewilderment and faint air of stupidity as he tries (minus a leg) to re-anchor himself in the confusion of civilian life after two years in a German camp are delineated with keen insight and great

affection. The readjustment is finally made, and Charley learns to love the woman who in a sense is his Rose by some other name.

This is an adult love story, on the purely natural level, that only once slops over into the clinical sentimentality so rampant in today's literary production. A highly enjoyable work, full of the well-bred, gently incisive and penetrating humor that even the author's countrymen will admit is "typically British." As Charley Summers would say, it's wizard. Smashing, really. Quite.

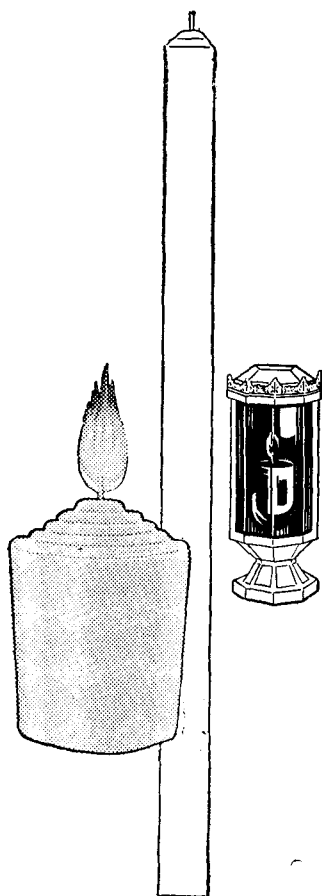
PAUL V. FARRELL.

Our Ally: the People of Russia. William A. Wood (as told to Myriam Sieve). Scribner's. \$3.

MR. WOOD is an American engineer who spent the greater part of the time between 1930 and 1942 helping the Russians run their factories. He had unusual oppor-

tunities for observation. With factual scientific precision Mr. Wood tells exactly what the Soviet citizen expects. Moreover, he leaves no doubt that these expectations are fully realized. The Russians expect to be insufficiently fed and clothed; they expect to be suspected of treason (deviation from the Party line); they expect to be terrorized, to live in perpetual fear of neighbors or even of their own children; they expect to be silent when there is the best cause for complaint. They get what they expect.

From the beginning Mr. Wood makes it clear that he likes the Russian people, that he is their friend, that he is infinitely sorry for them. For they are a people without a chance. Mr. Wood makes it only too evident that the Russians do not like their masters, how ever much they may demonstrate in public; woe to anyone who fails to show the proper spirit! There is, to be sure, a great deal of toadying, especially among the professions.



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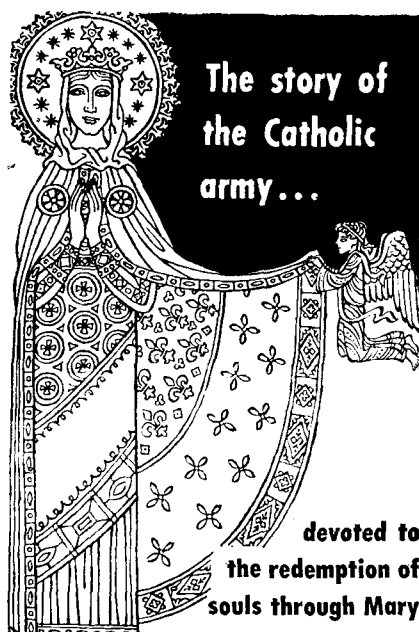
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The "personal Stalin cult," Mr. Wood comments, "struck me as sheer devil-worship. It made me sick. All I wanted was to finish my job fast and get out." The author was present in Moscow during 1937, the year of the terrible purge. With this purge qualities which made the Russian people likable disappeared—under the shadow of fear. No longer did anyone venture to reveal his former fondness for the American engineer who liked Russians. "And so, I grieved—alone and bereft," observes Mr. Wood. "For the Russian people of endearing qualities, with warm and generous hearts, of child-like curiosity and naive questions, seemed to have disappeared with the purge."

This book is to be especially recommended for misguided people in our own country who would have us emulate the life pictured in these pages.

JOHN CURNOS.

Flowers for the Judge. Joseph Clark Baldwin. Coward-McCann. \$3.

IF you're eager to read the inside story of the career of Joseph Clark Baldwin III, who until recently was the delightful representative in Congress from the Sixteenth District of Manhattan, you won't find what you're after in *Flowers for the Judge*, which doesn't pretend to be Congressman Baldwin's autobiography. *Flowers for the Judge* is a whimsical assortment of anecdotes about the author's father, the late Joseph Clark Baldwin II, who seems to have been one of the most genial tyrants of Westchester in the early 20th century. There were plenty of other businessmen, no doubt, who made enough money to commute from Mount Kisco, but very few who indulged in the practical jokes for which Joseph Clark Baldwin II was beloved. Once, so his son tells us, he disrupted one of Mrs. Baldwin's tea parties by racing half-naked into the drawing-room, dressed only in a bath-towel and an Indian feather. The act, his son claims, was "an irresistible impulse." Westchester was probably a better place for "Judge" Baldwin's having lived there.

• REVIEWERS •

RUDOLF ALLERS is the author of *The New Psychologies*, and *The Successful Error*, among other works on psychology and psychiatry.

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PAUL V. FARRELL is an editor for the Conover-Mast organization.

JOHN CURNOS contributes to the New York *Herald Tribune* and the *Saturday Review of Literature*.

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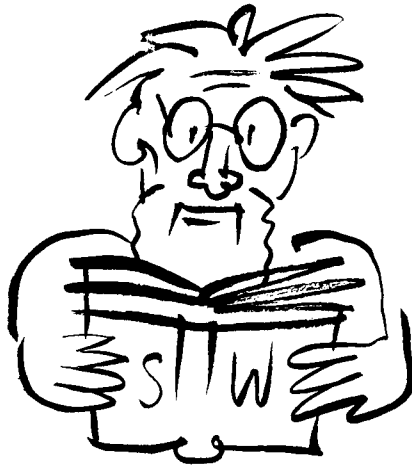
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